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ABSTRACT

This paper suggests basic points of literary and historical background necessary for the study of African literature and provides an annotated bibliography of literary and historical references. The first part of the paper lists threads of historical significance often found in African literature: the division of Africa into colonies in the nineteenth century; the resultant imposition of diverse cultures; English as the common language and medium of instruction; and English and French as the two literary languages. Ideas on social and cultural change in Africa are also presented based on "Africa in Social Change," by P. C. Lloyd. The dilemma of the African writer is discussed by drawing references from "Perspectives on African Culture," edited by Christopher Heywood. Finally, the annotated bibliography cites works that articulate the stratification of African society into "haves" and "have-nots" and the incipient class conflict that resulted from a European inspired elitism. Most of the citations are actual literary works, although some represent historical or critical reviews. (HOD)

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AFRICAN LITERATURE: THE BONDS OF TRADITION VERSUS THE WINDS OF CHANGE

A Critical Review and Selective Bibliography

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I. INTRODUCTION

During the school year 1970-71, when employed as a Specialist in English Supervision in the Baltimore City Public Schools, I had the unique experience of supervising the work of a young Nigerian teacher-ambassador, Joseph Bolarinde Obebe, who was visiting the United States under the Experiment for International Living. Bola (who used that name as a rejection of his Catholic name "Joseph" and the imperialism that it implied) was involved in a program of teaching African literature and culture for teachers and students in Baltimore's secondary schools. I was responsible for helping him to organize his program to fit into the existing course of study and for scheduling his visits, on a rotating basis, to the high schools in the area.

It is to Bola's influence and work that the basic idea for this research effort must be credited. Also, much of the information about West African (especially Yoruba) culture may be credited directly to the long conversations as we developed his program for the year.

Bola is the second son of the late Chief Obebe Sade, head chief of Ogbon Ishan in Afin Compound, Otun-Ekiti, Western State of Nigeria, West Africa. His education began at the Catholic elementary schools in his home town and extended through teacher's college and eventually the University at Ife, where his American contacts led him into the teacher-ambassador program. His first-hand accounts of his own family and culture were invaluable for insights into the current dichotomy between tradition and change which is so apparent in the literature. And his knowledge of the literature put me into contact with many sources of African literature and criticism. Although some of the activities and materials are reflections of the work planned with Bola, they are not mere duplications of that effort. Many of the sources he suggested have been examined in depth in order to provide material suitable for students.

The most valuable information which led to the selection of the theme came from Bola's perceptions of influences in his life and those of his class. Bola identified three recurrent themes (or purposes) of African writers:

1. Africans had a deep and complex culture of their own; they did not suddenly learn of culture from Europeans.
2. African societies were not mindless; they had philosophies of great depth and beauty.
3. Africans now need to develop a sense of their own identity and humanity.

Following these basic guides, this paper will try to serve the purpose of providing a resource for teachers -- to suggest the basic points of literary and historical background that are essential for the serious study of African literature and to provide an annotated bibliography of references , both historical and literary, that teachers and students would find informative and useful and enjoyable. All of the references suggested have been surveyed by this writer, and all of the literary works have been read in their entirety.

II. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CHANGE IN AFRICA

There are many references that deal in depth with the tremendous impact of social change brought about by the emerging independence of African nations from the oppression of colonialization. Most of them tend to agree with the observations of the African teacher to whom I referred in the first part of this paper: that African people are now struggling to develop their own clear sense of their identity and humanity - that the effects of modernization have been traumatic. Bola Obebe identified several threads of historical significance that are refined and expanded in the literature:

1. The division of Africa into colonies in the nineteenth century by Britain, France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Holland.
2. The resultant imposition of diverse "foreign" languages and the superimposition of different cultures upon the native cultures.
3. English as the common language and medium of instruction
4. English and French as the two literary languages

In addition to the material provided through Mr. Obebe, a single basic reference has been selected for the information which develops the background of the current dilemma of the African writer. That book is Africa in Social Change by P. C. Lloyd (Baltimore, Penguin books, 1967).

The ideas presented in this portion of the paper are based upon reading of Lloyd's book. The material is presented in outline form in order for it to be useful to teachers and students making use of this resource.

OUTLINE: SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CHANGE IN AFRICA

I. The depth and diversity of African culture results from a long adhered to set of traditions and historical institutions.

A. Ancient Ghana reached the height of its power in the eleventh century; it controlled a number of nations.

B. Political and cultural development in the early kingdoms of Northern Nigeria parallel in scale and complexity the European feudal kingdoms.

C. Many of the beliefs and traditions which still exist among African tribes had their origins in ancient tradition which has been preserved by a strong oral tradition rather than through written history. These traditions and cultures were extremely diverse.

D. The advent of the period of colonization further compounded the diversities of language and tradition; for example, Nigerians and Ghanians can converse, but communication with French speaking cultures in nearby states is difficult.

E. Linguistic differences are extreme: more than eight hundred languages are spoken ; food patterns and cultural values all inhibit communication.

F. Cultural differences are reflected in myths of origin, by which many claim single particular ancestors. (For example, The Yoruba claim descent from Oduduwa, the first man, whom the supreme god sent from heaven to create the earth.)

II. Most African nations find their peoples still adhering to certain basic tribal customs and beliefs which compound problems of modernization.

A. There is still strong adherence to the descent group concept which causes the ancestral influence upon behavior to remain strong. Representation of man's rights through such descent patterns produces conflict in legal deliberations.

B. Because of emphasis upon descent groups, different social rankings are possible among members of families.

C. Social order is maintained through balanced opposition of descent groups.

D. Some slavery which existed in colonial days has left a stigma of slave descent on some families.

E. Most modern Africans believe in some degree of predestination, in magical forces, and in witchcraft; these beliefs are strangely mixed in with christian customs.

F. The major reason for Africa's current difficulties in achieving unity is the failure of colonizing nations to place emphasis upon education and internal development.

III. The geographical complexity of Africa contributes to the continuance of cultural diversity and accompanying strife.

A. The range in natural environment is from the bare deserts of the North to the tropical rain forests and mangrove swamps of the Guinea coast.

B. West Africa consists of fourteen (or more) independent states including Portugese Guinea, Ghana (the richest), and Nigeria (the poorer economy).

C. Nigeria's population of 56 million exceeds all of the remaining fourteen states; sixty percent of the Yoruba population now resides in towns of more than 20,000 with three-fourths of adult men farmers commuting between the town compound and hamlets at farms as much as five miles away.

D. The remainder of West Africa's population is sparse, with twenty-five persons to a square mile the approximate mean.

E. Most West Africans today as in the past are agriculturists, with the yam as the major crop (30 different types grown by Yoruba alone).

F. Two-thirds of West Africa's exports are products of peasant farmers, but only a small minority of the population participates in affluence.

IV. The many social and industrial changes involved in modernization of Africa have resulted in traumatic and paradoxical situations for the people of Africa.

A. The impact of the jet age is barely felt by many tribal groups, but most ancients aspire to have their children enter the new culture. Many scientists, university lecturers, and doctors are products of tribal peoples (often illiterates).

B. Town life paradoxically intensifies tribal relationships in that the ethnically heterogeneous groups' competition for employment exascerbates rivalries and compounds hostilities.

C. Some groups who have embraced Western concepts of christianity have found themselves isolated and ostracized.

D. Africans find themselves in constant dilemmas as modernization and westernization bring traditional and new concepts of family and marital roles and parental authority into conflict as young couples set up homes far from their kin.

E. Contacts with modern attitudes of isolation and rejection partially cause nostalgia for the past; this nostalgia is recurrent in African literature as are other conflicts.

V. Probably the greatest change and conflict results from the development, following the advent of independence, of a distinct Europeanized elite.

A. A long-established westernized elite can be traced to the colonies of freed slaves returned to Sierra Leone by the British.

B. Many western educated leaders bargained for and got transfer of power following granting of independence; often these leaders were supported by urban workers and western-exposed ex-service men (World War II).

C. Often traditional tribal leaders were either western educated or literate in western languages.

D. The creole type of elite (mixed blood) is the most clearly distinguishable Europeanized group. They held European values of furnishing, clothing, food, as well as standards of beauty.

E. A few distinctly European elites remain in African countries, where they epitomize standards of European status and "civilization."

III. THE DILEMMA OF THE AFRICAN WRITER

Many literary critics have written of the conflicts facing the contemporary African writer. One excellent source of criticism is Perspectives on African Literature, edited by Christopher Heywood (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1971). It consists of a collection of essays from the Conference on African Writing in English, at the University of Ife, December 16-19, 1968. In the introduction, Heywood points out the central problem: the complexity of African literature, especially in the relationship between vernacular traditions and publishable literary vehicles. This book clearly affirms Bola's concept of the writer's problem: interpreting and reliving history and at the same time reconciling the reality of the eroding influence of the long period of colonialism. Each of the articles referred to in the remainder of this chapter is found in Heywood's book; and each deals with the peculiar aspects of the African writer's dilemma.

James Ngugi, in The African Writer and His Past,"" talks of the total involvement of the African novelist with the past, an involvement that seems to be lacking when the novelist deals with the present. Ngugi refers critically to Aristotle's distinction, that historians describe what has been, poets what might be. Ngugi laments the fact that the African character is not seen in an active, cause-effect relationship with a significant past (as evidenced by the treatment of Stephen Kumalo as a pathetic figure in Cry the Beloved Country); he suggests that this shallow treatment forces the modern writer to try to do better-- to attempt to restore the African character to its history. Accordingly, says Ngugi,

the modern writer rejects the Christian god and resumes the broken dialogue with the gods of his own people.

Ngugi explores the work and ideas of Chinua Achebe, who, he suggests, is less guilty than most writers of gazing into the past and forgetting the present. Achebe paves the way for progress by restoring the will of the African character to act, to have a vital relationship with the social and political landscape -- to live in history but also to make history. Ngugi quotes Achebe as follows (page 7):

> If I were God, I would regard as the very worst our acceptance, for whatever reason, of racial inferiority. It is too late in the day to get worked up about it or to blame others, much as they deserve such blame and condemnation. What we need to do is look back and find out where we went wrong, where the rain began to beat us.

In summary, Ngugi sees the task of the writer as the aiding of his society to regain belief in itself.

In his introduction to "The Survivors," Dr. E. Nevere of Kenya sounds a note similar to that of Ngugi:

> The whole irony of the European occupation is that its effect on the basic set of values and customs of the African peoples was virtually negligible. It is as if the European had stopped-over in the country for a couple of years or so.

Nevere laments the historical image of the African as a "child" or ugly screaming savage with gleaming white teeth. He cites as an example Elspeth Huxley's Red Strangers, in which good characters live

in puzzlement about the ways of the white man, while the other characters are base "things" and crooks.

Dr. Abiole Irele (also in Perspectives) talks of traditions of African literature existing in indigenous languages and relating to traditional social structures and cultures. Modern African literature grows out of the rupture created within indigenous history by the colonial experience. The dilemma, according to Irele, lies in the distinct background of experience within the cultural, social, and historical framework; but expression in a language not deliberately chosen and by nature removed from the African framework of experience. The resulting problem is dual: an incomplete mastery of a different linguistic medium, and modern Africa as a half-child of African history and Western colonialism. Further, there are more writers than there is an educated public to consume the writing. The African novel belongs to European tradition by language and form, but stands outside of the European tradition not only by references, but also by the way language and form are handled.

Eldred Jones, "Progress and Civilization in the work of Wole Soyinka," sums up the dilemma of the African and his European leanings by quoting a Soyinka satirical poem on an African student in London:

> My dignity is sewn
> Into the lining of a three-piece suit,
> Stiff, and with the whiteness which
> Out-Europes Europe

For the student of African literature, it is essential to provide a view of the dilemma of contemporary African culture and the writers

who reflect it. The student must be able to understand the surface simplicity of the language as indicative of the writers' newness to that language. But by the same token, this simplicity must not be allowed to suggest simple-mindedness or lack of incisive treatment. The themes of historical tradition and social protest for change are constantly interwoven threads in African literature of the contemporary period.

IV. EXEMPLARY LITERATURE OF THE NEW AFRICAN CULTURE: A SELECTIVE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

The works cited below are included for two major reasons. First, they are worthy of study as major works of literary merit to be used for study by students of varying levels of sophistication. Because of the relative simplicity of the language, reasons for which were indicated in earlier portions of this paper, less mature students would find them relatively easy to comprehend. Yet, treated adequately, these works can challenge the imagination and sophistication of the most mature and able students; for they deal with themes and concepts integral to the development of clear concepts of the development of humanity. A second reason for their serious study is the significance of each work in articulating the serious and traumatic conflicts that are part of contemporary African life: the stratification of society into "haves" and "have-nots" and the incipient class conflict that results from a European inspired elitism.

Each of the selections has been read and given a critical review which should provide guidance to both teachers and students alike as they approach the serious study of the writers and their craft. Annotations are arranged in simple alphabetical order, since there appears to be little reason for a chronological or other arrangement. All of the works cited deal directly with the unavoidable themes in African literature today. Some of the works represent historical or critical reviews, but the majority of them are actual literary works.

Aidoo, Ama Ata. No Sweetness Here. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971.

This collection of stories highlights the conflicts between the traditional tribal customs and the effects of westernization. Outstanding among the stories are "Everything Counts" in which the narrator comes to the realization that African women have become obsessed with Western standards of beauty as symbolized by the wig; and "No Sweetness Here," which explores the tragedies resulting from changed laws-- in this instance a woman no longer is allowed to retain her child after divorce, which normally would have been the case under tribal custom. These stories all are excellent and told with a poignancy which underscores the tragedy of conflicts between traditional and modern westernized culture.

Achebe, Chinua. Arrow of God. New York: John Day Company, 1967

Achebe's third novel explores the theme of the forces of colonialism (church, government, trade) that precipitate crisis and bring about the destruction of the hero who epitomizes the quality of tribal life.

Ezeulu, chief priest of Ulu, an early god, is forced to defend his position against reactionary tribal forces and against European culture and religion. The reactionaries are symbolized by Nwaka, a wealthy chief who ruptures relationships with the tribe. Nwaka's European counterpart is Captain Winterbottom, head of the local colonial administration. The forces in combination are so inexorable that Ezeulu's mind becomes deranged and he lives out his days as a demented high priest who is spared the realization of the extent of his destruction.

Achebe, Chinua. Man of the People. New York: Heinemann, 1966.

Set in post-Independence Nigeria, Man of the People is an indictment of Nigerian politicians. It tells the story of Odili Kamalu, a university graduate and teacher, and his political involvements. As a young member of his country's elite class, Odili is seduced into opportunism by the political chief Nanga and other government officials who live an extravagant life supported by fraud, bribery, nepotism, and corruption. Later, Odili becomes a political opponent of Nanga and loses in a rigged election in which nothing in the country is changed. The novel comments on corruption but offers no resolution of the problem.

Achebe, Chinua. No Longer at Ease.

Achebe's second novel is set in modern Nigeria, just before the Independence. The chief character is Obi Okonkwo, grandson of Okonkwo of Things Fall Apart(see later notation). Employing the flashback technique, the novel starts with Obi facing trial for accepting bribes as a civil servant. Obi is a young, educated elite who returns from England determined to help wipe out corruption. He is in love with Clara, a descendant of slaves, whom, he is warned, he should avoid.

Attempts at bribery in his position as Scholarship Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Education are resisted at first, but Obi eventually succumbs to temptations as a result of indebtedness and accepts bribes. Just when he decides to reform, his crimes are exposed and he is arrested.

Obi's life symbolizes the clash between the old and the new, especially in his tragic relationship with Clara, whom his parents reject. And in the end, it is this clash between the old and the new that hastens his downfall.

Achebe, Chinua. Things Fall Apart. New York: Astor-Honor, Inc., 1959.

Okonkwo, son of Unoka (a failure), achieves wealth and status in his tribal society as a result of his diligence and determination to succeed. Achebe shows the ease of upward mobility in traditional African society. Also, he glorifies the traditions and values of tribal society where sharing was the rule; for example, Okonkwo's feast after the bountiful harvest. As Okwonko says: "I am calling a feast because I have the wherewithal.... My mother's people have been good to me and I must show my gratitude." (p.71)

The theme, apparent in the title, is struck in the statement of one of the elders: "It is good in these days when the younger generation consider themselves wiser than their sires to see a man doing things in the grand old way." Further in the same speech the elder foreshadows collapse of the old tradition: "An abominable religion has settled among you. A man can now leave his father and his brothers. He can curse the gods of his fathers and his ancestors.... I fear for you; I fear for the clan." (p.73)

The novel proceeds to develop the ways that the alien white church, government, and courts had reduced tribal customs and values. Okomkwo grieves for the clan, which he sees breaking up and falling apart, and mourns for the warlike men who have become soft like women. In successive clashes with the new authority, Okonkwo is utterly defeated, commits suicide, and thus according to tribal custom loses his right to burial and to ancestral deity among the clan rulers. His complete and utter devastation is symbolic of the destructive forces of colonialization.

Bier, Ulli and Gerald Moore, Modern Poetry from Africa. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1963

This anthology contains a full range of poetry representing a variety of famous and lesser known writers. Countries represented include Madagascar, Senegal, Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, and others. It is useful for a selective arrangement of poetry for a unit or as a basic text for a course in African poetry. It contains succinct biographical notes on authors.

Bier, Ulli, ed. Political Spider: Stories from Black Orpheus. New York: Africana Publishing Corporation, 1969.

This is a collection of stories by West African writers. Originally published in the magazine Black Orpheus from 1963 to 1966, the anthology is useful to show major trends in African writing today. The majority of writers represented are Nigerian, although other countries are represented. The divisions of the writings include "The African Tradition," " The Islamic World," and "People."

This anthology would best be used as a supplementary set of readings for a unit in order to gain a sense of the flavor of African writings. Noteworthy authors included are Amos Tutuola, the folklorist; Jan Carew; Chinua Achebe; and Ama Ata Aidoo.

Cartey, Wilfred. Palaver: Modern African Writings. New York: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1970.

This anthology should be used as base reading for a mini-course in African literature at secondary level, especially with junior high students or with slower readers at senior high school level. It provides a pleasant, easily readable introduction to basic themes in African literature. The themes are intriguing: "Folk Myths and Believing," "The

Elements Threaten," "The Environment Vibrates," "The Land is Tilled," "And Made Desolate by Man," and "But Still, Woman and Love." Some of the selections which students would especially enjoy are:

"Chaka the Zulu" by Thomas Mofolo

"The Palm-Wine Drinkard" by Amos Tutuola

"Weep Not Child" by James Ngugi

"African Poetry" (selections) by Ulli Bier

Finnegan, Ruth. Oral Literature in Africa. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970.

This rather scholarly text is useful to the mature, advanced student of African literature or to teachers as a research source. It is a review of the various forms of literature produced by African writers. It is of limited use to some advanced secondary students, but would not be recommended for general use with younger students except for certain sections that might yield interesting information for reports.

Heywood, Christopher, ed. Perspectives on African Literature. New York: Africana Publishing Corporation, 1971.

A series of essays by various scholars, covering a wide range of topics. Four major divisions: Literature and Criticism, Language and Style, Literary Forms, and Authors and Works. This is an excellent reference for teachers and scholars.

Koelle, Rev. Sigismund W. African Native Literature. London: Church Missionary House, 1854. (rpt 1970 from a copy in the Fisk University Library Negro Collection.)

This collection of proverbs, tales, fables, and historical fragments is produced first in the original

Kanuri or Bornu language and then in translation. It is an invaluable early source of material for a unit on folklore or mythology and as an aid to understanding some of the intricacies of traditional African Culture.

Some of the interesting titles included are listed below:

Stories: About Friendship
A Servant of God

Fables: A Hen and a Cat
The Weasel and the Hyena
The Toad and the Rat
How Sense Was Distributed

Historical Fragments: An Account of Locusts
An Eclipse of the Sun
Bornu Kings

The third and final section of the book contains an extensive vocabulary translation of the Bornu language.

Laye, Camara. The Dark Child. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1954.

Dark Child represents the epitome of nostalgia, often characteristic of the African writer. In looking backward to past glories and ways of life, the modern African finds himself secure amid the turmoil and ambiguity of rapidly changing

Laye was born at Kouroussa in French Guinea, and was a descendent of the Black Sudanese who in the middle ages founded the fabulously rich Mali Empire. The story is Laye's own story, an autobiography which evokes the simple life of a dark child on the plains of Guinea. The nostalgic yet dignified intent of the story is best revealed in Laye's dedicatory page, which carries the following notes in

dedication to the past:

To My Mother

Simple woman, patient woman, O Mother, I think of you...

O Damon, Damon of the great race of blacksmiths, I think of you always; always you are with me. O Damon, my mother. How I should love to embrace you again, once again to be your child....

Dark woman, African woman, O mother, I thank you for all you have done for me, your son, so far from you yet so near!

Mphalele, Ezekiel. African Writing Today. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1967.

This excellent anthology edited by Mphalele could well serve as base reading for an entire short survey course in African literature. Represented are various excerpts from almost every contemporary African writer. Mphalele indicates in the introduction that the anthology is intended to give the reader a map of themes and styles of African writing in the metropolitan languages -- English, French, and Portugese. He refers to it as still a "Young and tender literature." Included is an array of well-known names such as Achebe, Soyinka, Tutuola, Aidoo, Sondhi, Senghor, Laye, and Mphalele. The anthology is best suited for mature readers.

Mphalele, Ezekiel. Voices in the Whirlwind and Other Essays. New York: Hill and Wang, 1967 (rpt 1969, 1972).

This is one of the rare sources of literary criticism of African and Pan-African literature. Mphalele's incisive view of African writing complelents the theme of this research effort: the duality of the African writer's concerns -- the backward look toward history and tradition and the conflict between tradition and the changes brought about by westernization. All of the essays originally were published in a variety of magazines. On page 144 of the

text, Mphalele places the entire movement in perspective:

> It is the will to conceive a common past and the ideal of a common destiny that has inspired the Pan-African movement. Tradition lives alongside the present, and so we, the writers commute between these worlds. We want to reflect our immediate present in foreign languages so as to reach a wider audience, and in one way or another we feel the desperate need to come to terms with an ever present past.

National Instructional Television Center. African Anthology: Teacher's Manual. Bloomington, Indiana: NIT, 1968-69.

This series of recorded television lessons as produced originally by the WNYE-TV station, is a course for intermediate grades through the senior high school, that introduces Africa through its literature, peoples, and customs.

There are fifteen lessons in all, among them histories, myths and tales, the poetry of Senegal President Leopold Senghor, selections from Things Fall Apart(Achebe) and the Palm-Wine Drinkard (Tutuola), protest literature, and literature of revolution. A bibliography also is provided. The entire series is available from:

National Instructional Television Center
Box A, Bloomington, Indiana 47401

Whiteley, W. H. A Selection of African Prose. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964, vol.1.

The avowed purpose of this volume is to relate African literature to African life. In the Foreword, Chinua Achebe reminds the reader that the prose tradition of non-literate peoples does not consist of just folk-tales, legends, proverbs, and riddles. He cites the example of the Igbo society where good oratorical

tradition is an established fact.

This volume is best treated selectively as a source of supplementary reading for any unit or course of study.

Whiteley, W. H. A Selection of African Prose. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964, vol.2.

The Introduction of the volume credits Western-type education for making possible the recording of oral traditions of the formerly illiterate societies of Africa. The volume includes a number of histories, speeches, folk tales and legends recorded by many well-known and some lesser known African writers from countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Senegal, and Nyasaland. The volume is a most valuable reference which should be used extensively in any unit on African literature.

One of the outstanding selections is the beautiful "Death of Nolive," from the novel Chaka published in 1931 by Thomas Mofolo (1877-1948). Mofolo has been described as the first great modern African author. His historical novel Chaka gives a vivid account of the rise of the Zulu state under the chieftan Chaka. "Death of Nolive" tells of the great choice Chaka was forced to make between his love for Nolive and the chieftanship. Heavy of heart, he does as he is bidden and kills his pregnant lover and goes on to achieve glory.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON SOME SIGNIFICANT AFRICAN AUTHORS

The authors listed below are significant ones whose contributions to the development of awareness of African literature beyond the confines of the so-called "dark continent" are universally recognized. Some whose contributions deserve recognition are missing because of the absence of any immediate sources of information. This omission does not in any way diminish their significance. Authors are listed and commented upon in alphabetical order. Basic sources are African Writing Today and Modern Poetry from Africa.

ACHEBE, CHINUA

Born in 1930 in Eastern Nigeria, Achebe was educated at Government College in Umuahia. Achebe worked in broadcasting for B.B.C. He has published a series of novels, all aimed at helping the African to hold his past in perspective while grappling with the present.

AIDOO, CHRISTINA AMA ATA

Born in Ghana and graduated from the University of Ghana, Aidoo's stories have appeared in Black Orpheus, and her verse in the Ghanian literary journal Okyeame and other anthologies.

CLARK, JOHN PEPPER

Born in 1935 in the Ijaw country of Nigeria, Clark was educated at the University College, Ibadan. In addition to considerable work in journalism, Clark has published several poems and a play.

LAYE, CAMARA

Born at Kouroussa, Guinea and ecucated at Conakry and Paris, Laye tells the story of L'Enfant Noir (The Dark Child) published in Paris in 1953. Laye also has published short stories in Black Orpheus.

MOFOLO, THOMAS

Mofolo was educated at Mission schools, and after becoming qualified as a teacher he became a proof-reader with the Paris Evangelical Mission. He is regarded as the first great African writer of

modern times. He wrote three novels: Moeti oa Bochabela (The Traveller from the East), Chaka, and Pitseng.

MPHALELE, EZEKIEL

Born in 1919 in the slums of South Africa, Mphalele attended St. Peter's School and Adams College, Natal. Banned from South Africa because of anti-apartheid activities, Mphalele emigrated to Nigeria. His major publications include several short stories, an autobiography, Down Second Avenue, and other works.

SENGHOR, LEOPOLD SEDAR

Born in 1906 in Senegal, Senghor is of the Serere tribe. He was a brilliant student, teacher, and eventually a government and political leader who eventually achieved the presidency of Senegal in 1960. He has been the principal African advo-ate of Negritude and has produced a substantial body of poetry.

SOYINKA, WOLE

Born in 1935 at Abeokuta in Western Nigeria, Soyinka was a graduate of the University of Ibadan. He produced a number of plays but seems to be best known for his poetry, which has appeared in Black Orpheus.

TUTUOLA, AMOS

Born in Western Nigeria in 1920, Tutuola had very limited education but achieved fame for his re-creations of myth an legend in his short stories and novels. Probably his best known sroty is the novel Palm-Wine Drinkard.